

## **Nature of Spouses Interaction in Conflict Situations as the Satisfaction with Marriage Condition at Family Life Different Stages**

Nadejda S. Borzilova, Elena A. Ovsyanikova, Maya Y. Hudayeva,  
Aleksandra S. Gerasimova, Olga E. Panich and Sergey V. Shkilev  
Belgorod State University, Pobedy St. 85, 308015 Belgorod, Russia

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**Abstract:** This research is devoted to empirical research of spouses behavior features in the conflict influence on their satisfaction with marriage as well as to detecting distinctions of interaction nature in conflict situations and spouses satisfaction with marriage at different stages of family life.

**Key words:** Marriage, family, stages of family life, satisfaction with marriage, matrimonial conflict, conflict situations

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of spouses interaction nature in conflict situations and satisfaction with marriage will always be relevant in psychological science as spouses interaction in conflict situations and satisfaction with family life play a large role in wellbeing of a family. Consideration of the matrimonial conflicts problems, their reasons, consequences and interrelations with satisfaction with marriage were researched by Eydemiller *et al.* (2000), Kratokhvil (1991), Schuman and Schuman (1992). Conger *et al.* (2014) psychological aspects of the conflicts arising between spouses in social and psychological aspect were considered by Levkovich and Zuskova (1995). Effective strategy of spouses behavior in the conflict can serve as a way of the family problems solution, establishing interaction and lack of ability to structurally solve conflict situations in different areas of family life can lead to decrease in satisfaction with marriage and as a result, to its destruction. Research of a satisfaction with marriage phenomenon in foreign and domestic psychology was conducted by such scientists as: Beach *et al.* (2003), Gee *et al.* (2002), Buunk and Mutsaers (1999). They considered it as the key parameter characterizing the matrimonial relations, special adequate realization of the family image which developed in consciousness of the person under the influence of meeting various events making their experience in this sphere. Kratokhvil (1991) in one of the works opens the stages of the matrimonial relations development corresponding to the periods of child education which we took as a basis in our research. These are matrimony till the birth of children matrimony with small children, matrimony with the matured children matrimony after

children are separated from parents. Each of the family life periods is characterized by definite purposes and tasks which spouses have to reach and solve in the course of joint life. Upon transition from one stage to another there are difficulties with reorganization of family system, functions, principles of behavior common to a family at the previous stage.

As the review of literature shows, many authors consider an interaction problem in conflict situations and satisfaction with marriage, without addressing nature of their interaction in conflict situations in solution of controversial issues in different areas of matrimonial life, especially without leaning on stages of family life which married couples pass. It also defined relevance of our research. The purpose of our research consists in defining extent of spouses interaction nature influence in conflict situations on their satisfaction with marriage at different stages of family life.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

We assumed that families at different stages of family life will differ on spouses interaction nature in conflict situations and their satisfaction with marriage, namely: spouses till the birth of children and after children separated from parents will show a destructive way of behavior in the conflict in the matters connected with child education, the mismatch of behavior standards, manifestations of jealousy, domination and are less satisfied with marriage, unlike spouses with little and matured children. Nature of spouses interaction in conflict situations concerning spheres of matrimonial life can exert impact on degree of satisfaction with marriage at different stages of matrimonial life, namely: active expression of

consent and compromise can exert positive impact on satisfaction with marriage, unlike active expression of disagreement and leaving from a conflict situation.

In the context of our research for the solution of objectives the following techniques were used: questionnaire “spouses interaction nature in conflict situations” by Y.E. Alyoshin, L.Y. Gozman. Test questionnaire of satisfaction with marriage by V.V. Stolin, T.L. Romanova, G.P. Butenko. Statistical data processing was carried out with use of N-Kruskala-Wollice criterion and the Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) on the basis of the statistical SPSS programs package. The 60 married couples living in Belgorod which were grouped on the basis of the matrimonial relations development stages corresponding to the periods of child education took part in the research: matrimony till the birth of children; matrimony with small children; matrimony with the matured children; matrimony after children are separated from parents. The volume of selection made 120 people of them 60 men and 60 women.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Main part:** During research spouses interaction nature in conflict situations at different stages of family life was studied. In Fig. 1, we see that positive average values are revealed in the matters connected with child education (Me = 0.125) and in the sphere of a mismatch of behavior standards (Me = 0.1375) at a matrimony stage with small children. It signifies the ability of young parents to agree structurally about methods of child education, joint execution of accepted standard rules and new family roles. Abilities of spouses to find a compromise in the conflicts arising in these spheres can promote strengthening matrimonial relations.

At matrimony stages with the matured children and after children were separated from parents in the sphere of a mismatch of behavior standards positive high values are found (Me = 0.25; Ia = 0.25) that defines mutually approving positions of spouses in aspects of own opinion expression in the discussion of any information and questions connected with daily routine of the events taking place. Rather pronounced negative values are revealed in the sphere of manifestation of domination by one spouse at matrimony stages after children were separated from parents (Me = -0.925) that shows relevancy of the predominating position of spouses question after children leave them, there is the next reorganization of spouses relationship system.

If while child is around, issues of the predominating position were resolved softer and did not reflect negatively in relationship of spouses, now this question rises most sharply. And at a matrimony stage till the birth of children this sphere has negative indicators (Me = -0.5375) at this stage of family life cycle there is a formation of matrimonial relations in aspects of establishing domination submission between spouses that can be shown in race for power, rivalry. The received negative values show that conflict is not of constructive nature in spouses relationship in these spheres. Negative values characterize the sphere of problems in relations with relatives and friends as at matrimony stages till the birth of children (Me = -0.5625), with small children (Me = -0.5) and at a stage with the matured children (Me = -0.5125). From spouses show flatness and demonstrate discontent through non-constructive showdown in respect of the third parties to a conflict situation due to the lack of clear boundary between a subsystem of primogenitors and a matrimonial subsystem as well as in questions of the friends connected with

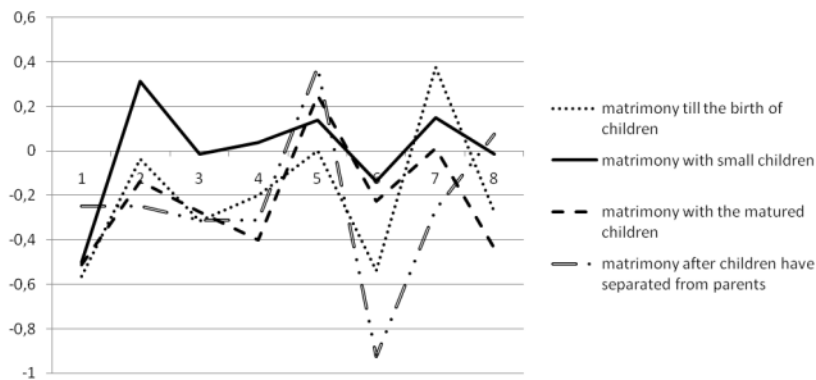


Fig. 1: Expressiveness of spouses interaction nature in conflict situations at different stages of family life (in comp. points). Problems of relations with relatives and friends; questions connected with child education; manifestation of aspiration to autonomy. Violation of role expectations; mismatch of behavior standards; manifestation of domination by one spouse; manifestation of jealousy; divergences in the relation to money

dSPACE of family system. Negative values are found also in the sphere of violation of role expectations at a matrimony stage with the matured children ( $Me = -0.4$ ) where spouses show negative reactions concerning violations of promises given to each other, spouses actively express the disagreement in relation to actions of each other, actively object and insist on their opinion. The sphere of divergence in relation to money has non-constructive conflict character at a matrimony stage with the matured children ( $Me = -0.4375$ ) where spouses express negative reaction in the conflict situations connected with irrational expenditure of the household budget by one of the spouses and insufficient planning and distribution of money. Close values are revealed also at a matrimony stage till the birth of children ( $Me = -0.275$ ) that indicates relevant questions of distribution of the young spouses household budget. At matrimony stages with small children ( $Me = -0.0125$ ) and after children were separated from parents ( $Me = 0.075$ ) in this sphere similar situations do not cause serious conflict situations.

By means of Kruskal-Wallis's criterion distinctions on a reliable significance value  $r$  is 0.05 were found  $N_E = 0.035$ , on indicator in matters connected with the child education. It shows that at different stages of family life spouses will differ on nature of interaction in the conflict situations connected with matters of child education. So on matrimony stage till the birth of children the questions connected with their education are not relevant for spouses that actually will point out lack of conflict situations in this occasion. At clarification of conflict situations in the questions connected with child education at a matrimony stage with small children spouses show active support and approval of each other. This stage of family life is characterized by the maximum unity of its members if spouses till the birth of the child clashed with each other, at the time of the child's birth, the family gets the chance to rally. For example, close relatives try to find similarity of separate external lines of the child to one of their own, the raised conflictness can pass into the background if the grandmother finds a birthmark, identical with hers, on the child. In the period of a matrimony after children are separated from parents, the questions connected with child education become conflict though during this period function of child education is minor but our spouses switch to the questions connected with education of grandchildren. Spouses in a new role of grandmothers and grandfathers, projecting the unrealized desires to the sphere of education, can project them at education of grandchildren. As a result it can be expressed in special attention to them, decrease in certain requirements that can be "apple of discord" for a family when educational positions of

grandmothers, grandfathers, fathers and mothers does not coincide. Distinctions between the selections of examinees studied by us on a reliable significance value are found  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $H_c = 0.031$  on an indicator manifestation of domination by one spouse. So at a matrimony stage after children are separated from parents, questions of the predominating position of spouses will be the most conflict because there is the next reorganization of spouses relationship system. If while child is around, issues of the predominating position were resolved softer and did not reflect negatively in relationship of spouses, now this question rises most sharply. Because spouses at this stage of family life direct all the special attention to negative aspects of each other, entering confrontation even more openly. At a matrimony stage till the birth of children this sphere also has the pronounced irrational form of behavior in the conflict that indicates formation of functional and role structure of a family when questions of distribution of the household budget, domination and submission are very relevant. Distinctions on a reliable significance value are found  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $H_c = 0.069$ , on an indicator of manifestation of spouses jealousy at different stages of family life. At a matrimony stage till the birth of children this phenomenon from the man or the woman can be shown not only at threat of love loss, loss of closeness as well as because of wrong judgments of the spouse behavior that for this stage is not relevant. The matrimony with small children in manifestation of jealousy is characterized by ability of spouses to reach compromise, thereby, strengthening the matrimonial relations and family in general. Manifestation of jealousy is not relevant for spouses with the matured children as the system of relationship between spouses who bring up teenage children was already created and those in turn exert impact on coordination and coherence of joint actions of spouses. At a matrimony stage after children are separated from parents, a conflict situation concerning manifestation of jealousy is characterized by demonstration of discontent but avoiding of open discussion, perhaps, this strategy of behavior in the conflict of the spouse is chosen for the extra-mental reason of loneliness fear in old age and the rigid reasoning. We revealed distinctions at the level of statistical tendency  $r$  is 0.1,  $h_c = 0.105$ , between indicators in a mismatch of spouses behavior standards at different stages of family life. Nature of spouses interaction till the birth of children in the questions connected with a mismatch of behavior standards is characterized by the fact that spouses do not state, openly, the attitude and take a waiting attitude and watch succession of events in this occasion. At matrimony stages with the little, matured children and after they are separated from parents, nature

Table 1: The multiple regression analysis of indicators of spouses interaction nature in conflict situations and their satisfaction with marriage at different stages of family life

Spheres of behavior in the conflict	Non-standard coefficients ( $\beta$ )	The standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ )	t-values	p-values
Problems of the relations with relatives	0.089	0.008	0.058	0.954
The questions connected with child education	0.579	0.282	2.154	0.035*
Manifestation of aspiration to autonomy	-0.767	-0.063	-0.410	0.683
Violation of role expectations	-1.563	-0.145	-1.085	0.282
Mismatch of behavior standards	3.434	0.280	2.223	0.029*
Manifestation of domination by one spouse	0.720	0.076	0.555	0.580
Manifestation of jealousy	0.810	0.078	0.581	0.563
Divergence in relation to money	1.545	0.156	1.210	0.230

\*, \*\* $p \leq 0.05, 0.01$

of spouses behavior in the conflict is shown in finding of a compromise and mutually approving positions of spouses.

Studying of satisfaction with marriage of spouses at different stages of family life showed high values of satisfaction with marriage in group of spouses examinees with small children and at spouses after children are separated from parents. Presence of respondents with the low level of satisfaction with marriage is noted in group of spouses till the birth of children and after children are separated from parents. In group of examinees which is made by spouses with the little and matured children the low level of satisfaction with marriage is not found. Distinctions at the reliable level of the statistical importance are found  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $H_c = 8.33$  on satisfaction with marriage of spouses at different stages of family life.

This result grants us the right to claim that at different stages of matrimonial life the spouse will differ on satisfaction with marriage as difficulties in the solution of tasks which married couples on each of standard crises face can reduce their satisfaction with marriage.

For confirmation of the second part of our hypothesis we carried out the multiple regression analysis for the purpose of profound studying of the received interrelations between spouses interaction nature in conflict situations and their satisfaction with marriage. Visually results are presented in Table 1.

At different stages of family life we referred satisfaction with marriage of spouses to a dependent variable and indicators of spouses interaction nature in a conflict situation to independent variables, i.e., they define satisfaction with marriage of spouses at different stages of family life. As a result of the carried-out multiple regression analysis the regression model including indicators of spouses interaction nature in conflict situations was received (Table. 1). In the analysis of regression model we found out that on indicators: questions of the children connected with education ( $\beta \leq 0.282$ , at  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and a mismatch of behavior

standards ( $\beta = 0.280$ , at  $p \leq 0.05$ ), statistically significant regression  $\beta$ -coefficients on a reliable significance value were received, this result gives us the grounds to claim that these indicators exert impact on satisfaction with marriage at different stages of matrimonial life. We can clear this result in the following, at a matrimony stage till the birth of children the questions connected with child education are not relevant for young spouses that reduces possibilities of increase in dissatisfaction with marriage. As for a mismatch of behavior standards, in similar situations the spouses do not enter the open conflict, do not show the discontent in relation to the told by the spouse which does not make negative impact on satisfaction with marriage, on the contrary, makes it better.

At a matrimony stage with small children the questions connected with child education exert impact on satisfaction with marriage. After the child's birth there is a reorganization of relationship between spouses that also exerts impact on satisfaction with marriage. Spouses can openly go conflicting, arguing the point of view, to show discontent or not to express disagreement with the spouse that speaks about ability of spouses to find compromise in the conflicts, there by, increasing satisfaction with marriage. At a matrimony stage with the matured children the questions connected with child education exert positive impact on satisfaction with marriage, the fact that they are solved in due time and laconically, owing to the fact that children already grew up and function of child education becomes less important for parents. The mismatch of behavior standards at this stage has no negative character that defines mutually approving positions of spouses in aspects of own opinion expression in the discussion of any subject and questions connected with daily routine of the events taking place that exerts positive impact on satisfaction with marriage.

**Summary:** Thus, hypotheses of our research are confirmed but demand additional study and check on

bigger volume and wider selection (for example, large families) taking into account various additional factors (individual and typological features, social position of family, age).

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the received results of our research grant the right to claim that at different stages of family life the spouses will differ on nature of interaction in conflict situations as they are inherent in each of stages, the family passes certain characteristic, specific problems and features, overcoming which brings the family to a new stage of development. Spouses till the birth of children and after children are separated from parents will be defined by a destructive way of behavior in the conflict which is shown in rivalry, active expression of disagreement and leaving from communication with nonverbal protest in the matters connected with child education, a mismatch of behavior standards, manifestation of jealousy, domination by one of spouses. Unlike spouses with the little and matured children who, in above the specified spheres, reach a compromise, cooperation and actively express consent. Nature of spouses interaction in conflict situations on the questions connected with child education and a mismatch of behavior standards exerts impact on satisfaction with marriage at different stages of matrimonial life.

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